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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT — Thursday, August 13, 1931.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "More Laundry Questions." Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering."

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I know I'm being improper and unconventional today. A lot of good housekeepers have begun to raise their eyebrows already. I know that Thursday is not washday. I know that in every well-regulated household the laundry tubs are taking a well-deserved rest today after their rush business early in the week. I know that every proper housekeeper put the subject of laundering out of her mind yesterday when she folded and put away the last piece of ironing.

Nevertheless, I'm going to talk about laundry today. There are some questions here that need to be answered. I've been saving them for a free morning like this when there's time to talk them all over.

The first question is a very frequent one - how to keep white clothes white after laundering. Housekeepers all the way from the Bronx to Berkeley, California, keep asking that. White pieces sometimes become yellowish, they tell me. Others become dingy and greyish. And still others come out with brownish streaks that show up as they are ironed. Why? And what to do about it?

To make clothes come out snow white, first thorough washing is necessary and second thorough rinsing in soft water is necessary. Clothes can't be expected to look white and immaculate if the soil is still in the fabric when it comes from the laundry tub. And soap left in may yellow it or cause those brownish spots we mentioned a minute ago. Iron in the water may be another cause.

It's a funny thing about rinsing. Most sensible souls know that clothes should be rinsed in one tub of fresh water after another until the water is clear and shows no trace of the cloudiness that comes from soap. But somehow lots of women spend all their energy on washing. And when it's time to rinse they lose interest. So they give the clothes a lick and a promise and let the rinsing go at that. Then they often write me letters wanting to know why their clothes don't come out pure white.

"What is the matter with the bluing that's being sold these days, Aunt Sammy?" someone inquired the other day. "I've tried every brand on the market and yet my sheets look greyish."

So I had to say, "Angeline, don't put all the blame on the bluing. Do you rinse those sheets until the water is clear?"

Angeline said she hadn't really bothered to go to all that trouble. Was rinsing so important?

There's no use asking the impossible of bluing. It can't disguise poor laundering. That's not its job. If carefully used, however, it counteracts the tendency of white clothes to become yellow.

While we're discussing this matter of thorough washing and rinsing, we'll have to take hard water into consideration. As every woman knows, who has had to deal with it, hard water makes both the washing and the rinsing process most difficult. The lime or other mineral salts in it interfere with the cleansing action of soap. And extra large amount of soap is required to make suds and the soap and mineral salts together from a curdy scum that adheres to the clothes and is most difficult to rinse out.

Water softeners are great helps. And I might say here that if I only had enough water softening material for one or two tubs of water, I should save it for rinsing.

Ordinary washing soda is one of the most effective and commonly used materials for softening water. Borax is not quite so effective, but since it is milder, it is preferred for finer fabrics such as silks and woolens. Some authorities claim that borax in small amounts improves the whiteness and freshness of linen clothes.

I don't need to mention, do I, that sunshine tans babies but makes the laundry white. It is not always possible for housekeepers who live in cities and in apartments to sun their clothes. But whenever possible, it is a good idea to let this fine natural bleach have a chance at them.

Oh, I forgot to mention something else about water softeners. They should be in and dissolved in the water before the soap or clothes go in. The amount needed depends entirely upon the water. Enough softener has been added when you are able to make a good suds by the use of the usual amount of soap. Hot water works better with softener than cold water. For this reason it is best to use hot water in washing whenever possible, or at least to soften the water while it is hot, and let it cool down to a suitable temperature.

Many times, as I said a minute ago, the iron in the water causes discoloration of clothes. Spots from iron may vary in color from yellow or brown to pink or red in different fabrics. Even soft, pure water may acquire iron from rusty pipes or storage tanks.

Another frequent question is how to get the very soiled places in clothes clean when using a washing machine. One woman says her husbands' shirts come out of the washer with the neck bands still soiled. This is a real difficulty, especially if the soil carries perspiration stains. Before putting such garments in the wash, it is a good idea to spread the very soiled places on a flat surface and rub them with a bristle brush dipped into a concentrated soap solution. Or rub soap over these soiled places, roll them and let them stand for a few hours.

What causes occasional creases in table linen that are difficult or often impossible to iron out, even after sprinkling?

We think your wringer is adjusted too tight. When you put your table cloths and napkins through it, those creases were almost ironed in. Simple as this matter of putting clothes through the wringer is, care must be used to prevent damage. Each article has to be straightened out, buttons must be folded in so they won't tear off or break or mar the wringer roll, and every article must be freed from the rest of the clothes before it goes in the wringer. Put it through in plain straight folds to aid in ironing.

Oh, yes, one thing more, See that the article is spread out evenly as it goes between the rolls. A lump of folds at one end and a single thickness at the other is hard on the wringer, the garment, and you.

Tomorrow: "Summer Fruit Pies."